

THE BENEFITS OF USING CENTRALIZED COLLECTION POINTS AT BUSINESSES

by Shelby Bell | Apr 30, 2019 | Knowledge Base | 5 comments



Are you disappointed every time you see a coworker toss a recyclable bottle into their personal trash can? Or do you feel like your colleagues are simply accustomed to throwing away waste below their desks without a second thought? If these questions strike a chord, then this post is for you. Most business owners or property managers we speak with are surprised when we explain that exchanging desk-side bins for a centralized collection point can improve their staff's recycling habits and increase diversion! If this sounds like something that could help improve your business' recycling efforts, then continue reading to learn more!

WHY REMOVE DESK SIDE BINS?

A growing trend is happening in offices, government buildings, educational institutions, and more to remove individual desk-side bins in exchange for a centrally located collection area. The benefits of moving to centralized collection points include increased waste diversion and lower custodial and labor costs. While tossing waste in the desk-side bin may be the more convenient disposal option, it definitely comes with consequences. It makes it easy for employees to toss trash and recyclables underneath their desk without thinking, leading to high custodial and disposal costs and low recycling rates. Although employees may initially feel annoyed or inconvenienced to go to a centralized area to dispose of waste, the benefits of this collection program far out-weigh the cons.

THE BENEFITS OF CENTRALIZED COLLECTION POINTS



INCREASES THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS AMONGST EMPLOYEES

Exchanging desk-side bins with centralized collections points completely changes employee recycling behavior. Instead of simply tossing garbage below the desk without a second thought, this method requires staff to approach the containers where signage and sorting information is very clear. The visibly marked containers make sorting materials easy, which retains the quality of the valuable recyclables, helping businesses to recycle more!



INCREASE RECYCLING RATES

The central collection system achieves high recycling levels because it fundamentally changes the way materials are collected. The clearly labeled bins keep materials separated and clean, and the signage helps staff realize many of the materials previously treated as waste are recyclable. Most business owners or managers we speak with are surprised to learn they end up collecting more recyclables with the centralized collection points than with desk-side bins. Within the first month of moving to centralized collection points, businesses will start reducing recycling stream contamination and improving recycling rates!



REDUCE DISPOSAL AND CUSTODIAL COSTS

Reducing your business' disposal and custodial costs is an added bonus of ditching desk-side bins. In most cases, businesses achieve savings because custodial staff no longer need to go desk-to-desk to collect waste. Instead, they can shift their focus to other duties and spend less time servicing individual waste bins. According to Ontario's Maximum Green program, a building in Toronto saved custodial workers one-third of their time on a floor of 100 tenants by not going desk-to-desk and saved an estimated \$50 per employee per year in custodial costs. This means a business of 200 people can save \$10,000 per year just by making employees responsible for discarding their waste into centralized bins. Between recycling more materials and reducing custodial costs, switching to centralized collection is one of the easiest ways to decrease

waste costs!

REAL-WORLD SUCCESS STORIES

Multiple studies have shown that recycling behaviors have improved after switching from desk-side bins to centralized collection areas. Here are a few real-world case studies that stood out to us:



Google has made several conscious efforts to improve their corporate social responsibility across the company. One of the most impactful changes Google implemented was the removal of trash cans from individual employee desks in their London office. By removing the bins, Google saw a 50% rise in recycling rates across their office. According to [Mother Nature Network](#), this simple move helped Google meet its green initiative goals.

Etsy removed all individual bins next to employee desks at its Brooklyn headquarters. They exchanged the desk-side bins for central collection points with recycling, compost, and landfill containers. Although there was an initial backlash from employees, it ended up being a successful move. [Etsy's](#) waste

costs decreased 18%, while compost rates increased 300%, and recycling went up 20%.



Harvard University eliminated all the individual trash cans on-site in turn for one central waste station. By sorting their materials by stream, Harvard saved almost \$21,000 throughout the first year of the program launch. [Harvard notes](#), "we've not only sustained a means to reducing waste expenses, but we've made it easy for people to practice "greener" waste disposal methods and become active members in reducing Harvard's carbon footprint!"

HOW TO SET UP YOUR CENTRAL COLLECTION POINTS

Receiving employee and custodial staff buy-in is a crucial first step in the process. Try to make disposing waste and recyclables convenient for your staff by placing your new containers in high-traffic areas like the kitchen or break room. It's best practice to stage your trash and recycling containers next to each other to enforce the separation of materials, so they remain clean and valuable. Make sure each container is labeled with clear color-coded signage to accurately represent each stream. Kick-off your new program by sending out a company-wide memo or announcement that communicates your commitment to waste reduction, and how the new program will help your business reach its recycling goals. Explain that buying into these minor adjustments will generate a significant positive impact!

A shift from desk-side bins to central disposal centers is ideal for businesses of all types and sizes who are looking to increase recycling rates and lower

disposal costs. If employees are initially hesitant or feel inconvenienced by the removal of their desk-side bins, reiterate the benefits that come along with making the switch to centralized collection bins. Of course, if you need assistance, RoadRunner will help with the design and implementation of any new system setup. Send us a comment or get in touch with us [here](#). Thank you for reading with us!

CENTRALIZED WASTE BINS VS. INDIVIDUAL WASTE BINS – WHICH IS BETTER?

Busch Systems | January 13th, 2015

Diverting waste from **Landfills** is still an ongoing battle for many workplaces with some employees having less than ideal **Waste** and **Recycling** habits – offices with waste bins at each work station and desk-to-desk custodial pickup, while convenient, does nothing to break people of these bad habits.

Think about it, if you didn't have to empty your own trash, would you think twice about what you've thrown in there?

The People Factor



Getting people to change their habits is easy, put a stop to employee [Waste](#) complacency by:

- Implementing [smaller waste bins](#) and [deskside recycling bins](#).
- Ending desk-to-desk custodial pick-up.
- Putting a [waste and recycling Station](#) in a centralized [Location](#) for employees to empty their smaller deskside waste baskets into.

By doing this you'll get people to stop and actually think about what they're putting in the trash. Having to empty their waste bins in a more centralized location will make them even more conscious of their waste habits since others can see what recyclable items they've thrown in the trash.

Taking the convenience out of throwing out trash is a good thing and will correct any bad habits that some work colleagues may have.

Size matters – with smaller waste bins you'll see your waste management costs shrink as well. Getting rid of desk to desk pickup

also saves money on custodial costs (averaging \$50 per employee a year!)* and frees up time for custodial staff to perform other duties.

The Money Factor



The costs of implementing new waste and recycling bins are often recouped within the year.

When this kind of waste reduction program was implemented in 25 Ontario government buildings, waste was reduced by 75-95% saving approximately one million dollars in custodial costs, the results of which were above and beyond what anyone expected.

The success of this program implemented by the Government of Ontario encouraged many other governments to replicate the program. Numerous organizations, local governments, and educational institutions have also put the same kind of initiatives into effect involving [Centralized waste and recycling Bins](#), the results of which vary but are consistently positive.

Besides being a win for the environment, centralized waste bins will save money, break negative recycling habits and allow custodial staff to focus on other tasks.

In this day and age, there's no reason for people to be lazy about recycling, especially when there's so much at stake.

*Estimate according to Max Green Program (Province of Ontario).

